

Appl. No. 10/052,809
Amdt. Dated Sep. 2, 2005
Reply to Office Action of Jun. 02, 2005

Remarks

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lemoff et al. (U.S. Pat. 6,198,864) in view of Mahlein (U.S. Pat. 4,744,618).

In response to the rejection, applicants have amended independent claim 5 by adding a limitation thereinto, in order to patentably define the claimed invention over the prior art cited by Examiner. Applicants now respectfully traverse as follows:

Claim 5 now recites "[a] method of extracting a selected channel from a multiplexed signal stream containing a plurality of channels, the method comprising the steps of: providing an optical device comprising a plurality of different output ports for directing the multiplexed signal stream to a selected output port corresponding to the selected channel; providing a concave mirror reflector which receives and reflects the multiplexed signal stream emitted from the selected output port of the optical device; providing a thin film filter which receives the multiplexed signal stream reflected from the reflector and divides the signal stream into the selected channel and remaining channels; and directing the remaining channels of the signal stream onto the reflector."

In the present invention, there are different light paths between the output ports and the filter corresponding to the different selected channels. Accordingly, each of the output ports can direct the multiplexed signal stream toward the concave mirror reflector at a different respective incident angle according to a different selected channel of the multiplexed signal stream. The filter can drop the different selected channels corresponding to the different selected output ports from which

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the multiplexed signal stream is emitted.

In contrast, Lemoff teaches a method of extracting a selected channel from a multiplexed signal stream containing a plurality of channels, the method comprising steps of: providing a main optical block 14 having an input surface 38 for receiving the multiplexed signal stream, and an objective mirror 40 integrated into the main optical block 38 for receiving and focusing and reflecting the multiplexed signal stream; providing a filter 20 for receiving the multiplexed signal stream and dividing the signal stream into a selected channel and remaining channels; and directing the remaining channels onto a reflective concave relay mirror 30.

Applicants acknowledge that the objective mirror 40 and the reflective concave relay mirror 30 disclosed by Lemoff can be replaced by a single concave mirror as disclosed by Mahlein. However, in Lemoff's invention, there is only one light path between the input surface 38 and the objective mirror 40 along which the multiplexed signal stream can be guided. Further, the filter 20, which is a wavelength-specific dielectric interference filter, can only drop one channel having a specific wavelength. Lemoff fails to disclose a step of providing an optical device comprising a plurality of different output ports for directing the multiplexed signal stream to a selected output port corresponding to the selected channel.

In summary, neither Lemoff nor Mahlein teaches or suggests to one skilled in the art a method involving providing an optical device comprising a plurality of different output ports for directing the multiplexed signal stream to a selected output port corresponding to the selected channel. Further, even assuming a motivation to apply Mahlein to Lemoff, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been led

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to a method involving providing an optical device comprising a plurality of different output ports for directing the multiplexed signal stream to a selected output port corresponding to the selected channel. Therefore, amended claim 5 is unobvious over any combination of Lemoff and Mahlein.

In conclusion, applicants assert that amended independent claim 5 is patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Lemoff in view of Mahlein, and request reconsideration and removal of the rejection.

Accordingly, dependent claim 7 should also be patentable, and the rejection removed.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 14, 16, 18 and 21 have been amended in respect of minor informalities only. The allowance of these claims should be maintained.

In view of the above remarks, the subject application is believed to be in a condition for allowance, and an action to such effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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